

# Montana Energy+Design

*Smart Houses - Beautiful Homes*

February 8, 2011

**Madame Chair Arntzen**

Members of House Committee on Business and Labor  
Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Re: Please support HB 406

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

Last year I attended and participated in the Building Codes Advisory Council Hearing that voted on adopting the 2009 Energy Code. The Council members represent many sections of the building industry but there was a glaring omission of energy efficiency expertise. The hearing lasted most of the day and revolved around a range of code modifications proposed by both the Department of Labor and Industry and by Montana citizens. The discussions, quite correctly, covered cost and build-ability issues as well as building science analysis. In the end, the Council voted to correct a couple of gaping holes in the Montana Code and added a few minor tweaks.

My overall sense of the discussions at that meeting was that the Building Codes Advisory Council was unprepared to discuss the technical issues that were involved. No one on the Council Board seemed to have an energy background and the knowledge to ask important questions or provide advice to other Council members. Almost all of the technical advice and informed opinion came from the public.

Energy production and use has become a big issue across the country and here in Montana. In the U.S., 40% of the energy consumed goes to Residential and Commercial buildings. Every 3 years the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is revised and presented to states for adoption. I think that it would make some sense to strengthen the Building Codes Advisory Council such that it could offer more valuable advice to other Council members in their deliberations and to the Department of Labor and Industry. Please support HB 406.

Sincerely,



Jim Baerg